

Thunderbird Regimented Training Program

(TRTP)

BRAVO COMPANY

On 1 February 1998, the Oklahoma Military Department (OMD) entered into an Interagency Agreement with the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) to operate a “co-ed residential boot camp” for adjudicated youth, 12 – 18 years of age, from the 77 Counties in Oklahoma. TRTP – Bravo Company is a “quasi-military” program that provides a safe and healthy environment for Cadets, consisting of five Departments. The first class began on 13 February 1998. Bravo Company conducts three 16-week classes a year, serving a total of 120 youth. Bravo Company is licensed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) with a 96 bed capacity. Bravo Company is licensed by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services as an outpatient clinic. Bravo Company has also received Accreditation from the American Correctional Association (ACA). As of 10 July 2003, 600 youth have successfully completed the program, with a recidivism rate of 13%, as of the last official collection of data.

ADMINISTRATION

The Administration Department consists of the Director of the Program, the OJA Liaison Officer, and an Education Specialist. This Department is responsible for ensuring that the Program maintains the standards as set forth by all the Oversight Agencies and all required documentation. Youth that are in the custody of The Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) are referred for Placement to the Thunderbird Regimented Training Program (TRTP), Bravo Company, from the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) Placement Office in Oklahoma City. Youth meeting the Placement Criteria are accepted to the Program, after being interviewed by a team from TRTP. The interview is conducted with the Candidate and their Caseworker from OJA. Each class begins and ends on a specified date. No Candidates are accepted after the first 72 hours of each beginning date.

OPERATIONS

The mission of the Operations Department is to provide a structured environment promoting discipline, responsibility, accountability, physical fitness, and community involvement. It is the responsibility of the Operations Department to ensure the safety and dignity of all Cadets and to build self- esteem and respect not only to themselves, but to others as well. Contract obligations require Operations to provide accountability and safety twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for sixteen weeks for cadets. The Operations staff maintains an 8:1 ratio during waking hours and a 12:1 ratio while Cadets are sleeping. Operation Staff monitor and track physical fitness by using the President’s Challenge as the standard. The Behavior Management System is also maintained and tracked. Operations conduct and oversee the Community Projects performed by the Cadets.

The requirements for Cadre consist of being CPR/1st Aid certified, certified in the Care and Custody Management System (CCMS), physically able to perform their duties, and be proficient in Drill and Ceremony (FM 22-5).

The sixteen-week program of the Operations Department consists of four Phases for both physical training as well as the mental attitude of the Staff. The phases are as followed:

CRAWL WALK RUN TRANSITIONAL

Phase I - CRAWL (Weeks One and Two)

All Candidates wear an orange vest from day one. The first two weeks are a teaching and mentorship time, in which the Cadre uses guidance and education as means for the Candidates to adjust to the Program. The emphasis is placed on teaching the standards rather than enforcing the standards, which is utilized in a later Phase. They are expected to learn what the Program is and what is expected of them. Once they learn the essentials of the Program (D&C, Cadet Handbook, Chain of Command, Safety Procedures, Fire and Tornado Drills, etc.), they earn the right to remove the orange vests and wear the Cadet uniform. They also earn the title of "Cadet" at this point. The intent of the orange vest is to identify those that are willing to comply with the Program and those that require more one-on-one training. (Difficulty with understanding or learning the Program could be the mental capacity of the Cadet, ie. unable to read, speak English, etc.) During Phase I, our objective is to teach, show, and mentor the Candidates in a caring, but firm manner.

Phase II - WALK (Weeks Three – Eight)

During this time, education classes begin and training is intensified. Discipline is at its highest level. Group consequences are essential to build teamwork. Cadets are expected to know all facets of the Program and all are held accountable for individual actions. During the first four weeks, Cadets have no contact with the outside world, except through letters. At the end of the fourth week, an Open House is held, consisting of their workers and families attending to witness what the cadets have learned during this time (a Pass and Review by Cadets and a tour of the Cadets' Quarters is conducted). Privileges and the Merit Level System begin at this time. (Sunday visitation and phone calls are earned, but visitors must be on a list authorized by each Caseworker.) Visitors are limited to 5 per Cadet, however they are allowed to visit only two at a time for accountability purposes.

The Merit System includes the Training Reinforcement Platoon (TRP). The Cadets that have demonstrated non-acceptance, non-compliance or are not motivated to work the Program, wear the PT uniform along with the orange vest,

distinguishing them from the cadets that are “doing the right thing”. These Cadets perform additional Physical Training and lose all privileges. They wear this uniform until they have satisfactorily completed the TRP requirements to return to Merit Status, which is normally 3 to 14 days. If, at this time, a Cadet is demonstrating non-compliance, he or she may be expelled from the program.

Phase III - RUN (Weeks Nine – Twelve)

Merit Level 3 goes into effect at this point. A great deal of Community Projects are completed at this time. Community involvement and the commitment to “do the right thing” are emphasized. The Post Residential Placement Staffings are conducted. The Counseling Department, with the individual Caseworker, conducts the staffings. Each TRTP Department provides information as to how the Cadet is progressing in the Program. Discussion at the staffings also consists of what the placement plan is for each Cadet once they complete the program. It is imperative for the Cadets to understand that they must complete the remaining aspects of the Program.

Phase IV - TRANSITIONAL (Weeks Thirteen – Sixteen)

The Director’s List Merit Level goes into effect at this point. This is the highest Level of Merit attainable. Community Projects continue to be emphasized. The Cadets are completing their educational requirements. Those Cadets that have been pursuing their GEDs will take the test. This is the most intense time of the program as the anxiety level of the cadets is at its peak. Rehearsals for graduation, building maintenance, and Out-Processing requirements are being met (certificates, recognition of accomplishment – President’s Challenge, leadership, etc.).

EDUCATION

During the 2nd week, each Cadet will be tested using the Test of the Adult Basic Education (TABE) system and the Wide Range Achievement Test III (WRAT), and are divided into appropriate educational groups to better serve their needs. The ratio for the Education Department is 12 students to one state certified teacher. Cadets that are 16 to 18 years old may choose to participate in General Equivalency Development (GED) classes or possibly earn credits to return to public school. All Cadets under the age of 16 are on the Core Curriculum tract to return to school. Cadets having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will receive instructions from a certified Special Education Teacher. All Cadets participate in the Phillip Roy Curriculum (life skills). The Cadets attend education classes for 13 of the 16-week Program. Education classes are conducted five days a week, with half a day on Thursday consisting of an elective class for the Cadets. Examples of the electives that the Cadets can choose from are: wood work, sports, life skills (home-EC.), boy scouts, class book, and the Program newspaper, etc.

COUNSELING

The Counseling Department provides the character, moral, and emotional guidance required to assist Cadets in maintaining focus on the operations and education learning processes and help ensure their ultimate effectiveness. The Counseling Department consists of a lead counselor, who is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), and a certified drug/alcohol Counselor (85% of the Cadets that in-process have used or are currently using some form of illegal substance). TRTP is licensed by the State Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse as an outpatient clinic to better serve the youth in our Program. During admissions, each Cadet is given the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI) and is given an initial assessment to develop their individual service plan to help them accomplish their established goals. The Counseling Department conducts several group sessions each week and are on call for individual counseling and crisis intervention 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Counseling Department is responsible for assigning each Cadet a Mentor from their Community to assist the Cadet with the transition back into the Community. The OJA Caseworker must approve the Mentor.

HEALTH SERVICES

Health Services consists of a locally contracted Physician, a Registered Nurse (RN), and a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). The RN and LPN are present daily to conduct "sick call" for those Cadets needing their service, as well as on call 24 hours a day for any emergency situations. Cadets are body mapped and checked daily for any unusual markings or bruises, and the results are given to Health Services. They conduct educational classes for both Cadets and Bravo Company Staff regarding any changes to medical regulations.

Modified Approach for Bravo Company

Mirroring the Youth Challenge Program (YCP) - Alpha Company's SOP, the basis of the Program is the same. There are significant differences, however. Grievance procedures are an issue and reporting them verbally and written in a specific time requirement, is mandatory. Health issues, AWOL and attempted AWOLs, and all incident reports, no matter how minor, are reported as well, both verbally and written, within the specified amount of time. Bravo Company adheres to the specifications and standards of oversight agencies, for example, DHS, OJA, ACA, Office of Client Advocacy (OCA), Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY), etc. Since Bravo Company is not a volunteer Program, the goal is to have as many Cadets successfully complete the Program as possible. Gender of the Cadets, in relationship to Cadre, must be considered at all times. Cadre assignment must be based on gender when supervising the Cadets.

The youth that participate in Bravo Company are street smart, most have been sexually active for some time, drugs are common place, most have experienced a lack of discipline in their lives, most have not been held accountable for their actions, and many have had no one to show genuine concern for their well being. TRTP provides a socialization process through which participants can develop self-image, discipline, motivation, and identification with the community necessary to function as contributing members of society. TRTP enhances education skills, instills a desire to continue self-improvement and teach those values and life skills required to succeed in their careers and within the family, as well as, the Community.